

**METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR A DEDICATED CONTROL CHANNEL IN
AN EARLY SOFT HANDOFF IN A CODE DIVISION MULTIPLE ACCESS
COMMUNICATION SYSTEM**

ABSTRACT

A method and apparatus for high data rate communication in a cellular/PCS communication system is provided. Specifically, the embodiment provides for early assignment of code channel for signaling channels (F-DCCH) in soft handoff. Thus, rather than simultaneously assigning a code channel for signaling data and another for traffic data for a particular Mobile Station (MS) in soft handoff, the code channel is assigned earlier for signaling data. Some of the unnecessary Base Station (BS) procedures with respect to the signaling data may be eliminated. An embodiment includes the concept of early signaling from the MS to request a code channel for signaling data, optionally followed by signaling (at a later time) from the MS to request a code channel for traffic data. This permits the MS to have the F-DCCH in soft handoff before having the F-DTCH (Forward Dedicated Traffic Channel) in soft handoff without requiring the BS to skip any of its procedures.